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REVIEWS.

Costs, Profits and Practices of the Can-House Tomato Industry in New Jersey. New Jersey Bulletin No. 353. By FRANK APP AND ALLEN G. WALLER.

The bulletin gives a very thorough analysis of the tomato business along these lines: the distribution of the crop with the economic reasons therefor; the development of the crop since 1900; the price which has been paid; the amount of the pack in various years and the cost of production for the State for each of the three years studied. Description of methods and practices in growing the crop are also given and conclusions drawn as to which methods are most practical and economical.

The center of the tomato growing industry is the south Atlantic States with Maryland and New Jersey leading in importance. Another important area is in southern Indiana while California is rapidly coming to the front as a producing section. High freight rates are having a big influence in forcing a wider distribution of the producing areas because of the relatively low value of the canned product.

Practically all can house tomatoes are grown under contract with the canners. Prices prior to the war were very uniform in the various States but during the war prices were relatively very much higher on the Atlantic coast. This was due to the position on the seaboard and also to the associations of growers which helped to hold up the price.

The tomato industry seems to be greatly affected by the weather, production in New Jersey being 5.1 tons per acre in 1918 and 2.6 tons in 1919. This naturally results in throwing tremendous burdens on the canners and results in as much as 70 per cent variation in the wholesale price of canned tomatoes from one year to the next. The canners due to this fluctuation often make heavy profits as was the case during the early war time years but may lose heavily as a result of having a heavy pack at a high contract price. Under the contract system the canner naturally absorbs the risk and as many of the canners have small plants and capitalization this results in frequent losses. The authors rightly think that some more

equitable scheme of dividing up the risk among producer and canner would be a step in the right direction.

The production cost of the tomato crop was found to vary very little from year to year up until harvest time. The harvest labor due to the varying yields naturally varied greatly and the final ton cost of production varied considerably from year to year. Much hand labor and fertilizer is involved in the production of the crop in New Jersey, these items being the heaviest costs. According to three-year averages the production costs are distributed as follows: Man labor, 32.1 per cent; horse labor, 14.4 per cent; manure and fertilizer, 26.17 per cent; land rent, 8.2 per cent; machine labor, 4.6 per cent; truck and tractor labor, 3.7 per cent.

A great variation between the costs of production of individual growers was found every year, some men producing at a loss every year. From their study of the farms included in the three-year study the authors conclude that the road to increased profit for the grower lies in reducing his costs. This may apparently best be done by studying to reduce man labor costs through growing a minimum of not less than eight acres and also by using larger machinery. The heavy manure costs may be reduced by substituting cover crops for purchased manure which is growing scarce. Apparently the best means of reducing cost per ton is in increasing yield per acre and the following recommendations based on the methods of the most successful growers are given:

1. Selection of seed from strong plants in the field in order to build up high yielding strains.
2. Early planting and frequent cultivation.
3. Spraying to control lice and fungi.
4. Use of cover crops.

The bulletin is well illustrated throughout and has voluminous data bearing on the subject. The cost data is presented in quantities rather than values, which will add much to its future value.

More cost studies such as this should be made of important agricultural industries of both the farm production and manufacture. This should lead to a more sympathetic understanding of the problems involved and should result in better cooperation among all parties within the industry.

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